

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the Office Action dated April 13, 2011 in the above-identified application. Based on the foregoing amendments and the following comments, allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-13, 15, 16 and 18-25 were previously pending in the application. Claims 11-13, 15, 16 and 18-25 have been withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 5, 6 and 8-10 are currently under consideration, with claim 1 being the sole independent claim. The amendments find clear support in the original application at least in FIGS. 3a-3i and the accompanying description. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Hoag et al. (US 5,105,538) in view of Hugler (US 6,671,955). Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hoag et al. in view of Hugler as applied to claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9 and 10, further in view of Schmidt (US 5,208,979). The rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Hoag discloses a process to make possible the cracking of wrought steel connecting rods, having typical ductility, with clean and level cracking planes that are exactly rematchable (col. 3, lines 4-8). An apparatus to carry out the process, shown in FIGS. 5 and 6 of Hoag, includes a transfer fixture 22, a cradle 24, a resilient stop 27 and lateral supports 28 and 29 (col. 3, lines 36-53).

Hugler discloses a method for treating bodies, such as connecting rods, bearings, ring-shaped housings and the like, wherein the bodies are subjected to a vibration treatment after they have been separated by breaking in order to prevent detachable adhering particles of the material from falling out in an uncontrolled manner (Abstract).

Amended claim 1 is directed to a method for producing a split bearing arrangement, in which in several machining stations a top bearing part is separated in a predefined fracture plane from a base bearing part monolithically connected thereto via a fracture separation process by applying force. Claim 1 recites that the base bearing part and the top bearing part are fixed on an adapter device that is conveyed from one machining station to another while the top bearing part is retained at least during some processes in the machining stations via a retractable auxiliary support

disposed on the adapter device and engaging the top bearing part. Claim 1 further recites that the base bearing part and the top bearing part are subjected to a release and cleaning process in the fracture plane after the fracture separation process, and that the location of the top bearing part is fixed, by a fixing means including holding pins, in position in parallel to the fracture plane with respect to the base bearing part during the release and cleaning process while the top bearing part is held by the fixing means in a loose manner in a direction perpendicular to the fracture plane, whereupon the base bearing part and the top bearing part are finally joined back together following the release and cleaning process by a screw connection comprising at least two screws.

Initially it is noted that Hoag discloses a method of making cracked connecting rods, whereas amended claim 1 recites a method for producing a split bearing arrangement. In embodiments, the present invention relates to a method of making a split bearing which ensures that the two bearing parts are maintained as a pair during processing steps following fracture separation, including a release and cleaning process.

Hoag discloses a process wherein the split and separated connecting rod pieces are carried to a remating station wherein bolts are used to connect the parts together (col. 5, lines 12-17). Thus, Hoag does not teach the claim limitation “whereupon the base bearing part and the top bearing part are finally joined together *following the release and cleaning process* by a screw connection comprising at least two screws” (emphasis added). Instead, Hoag discloses a screw connection following fracture separation of the connecting rod parts.

In addition, claim 1 recites that the location of the bearing parts are fixed in position by a *fixing means including holding pins ... during the release and cleaning process*. The fixing means of claim 1 holds the parts in position parallel to the fracture plane and holds the bearing parts in a loose manner in a direction perpendicular to the fracture plane to facilitate the release and cleaning process. The Examiner concedes that Hoag does not disclose a release and cleaning process in the fracture plane after the fracture separation process. Thus, Hoag cannot disclose use of a fixing means including holding pins during the release and cleaning process and cannot disclose use of a screw connection following the release and cleaning process.

Hugler may be considered as teaching a vibration treatment after separation by breaking. However, Hugler fails to teach use of a fixing means including holding pins to hold the top bearing

part to the base bearing part during the release and cleaning process, as required by amended claim 1.

For at least these reasons, amended claim 1 is clearly and patentably distinguished over Hoag in view of Hugler. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8-10 depend from claim 1 and are patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Based upon the above discussion, claims 1-3, 5, 6 and 8-10 are in condition for allowance.

General Comment on Dependent Claims

Since each of the dependent claims depends from a base claim that is believed to be in condition for allowance, for the sake of brevity, the Applicant believes that it is unnecessary at this time to argue the further distinguishing features of the dependent claims. However, the Applicant does not necessarily concur with the interpretation of the previously presented dependent claims as set forth in the Office Action, nor does the Applicant concur that the basis for rejection of any of the previously presented dependent claims is proper. Therefore, the Applicant reserves the right to specifically address the further patentability of the dependent claims in the future.

CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith to our Deposit Account No. 23/2825, under Docket No. H0075.70116US00.

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Respectfully submitted,

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